

D'Costa, A.P. (Ed.) (2006) *The New Economy in Development: ICT Challenges and Opportunities*, Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN: 0230001467 Price: £50.

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In this edited tome, D'Costa and a number of respected contributing authors offer a trenchant analysis of the new economy, and in particular the role that ICTs play in it, highlighting challenges and opportunities. The material covered is global in scope, with specific chapters on Argentina, India, the Arab region, and Africa, as well as both Less Developed and Transition Economies in general.

The thrust of the arguments in this book is to examine how ICTs can contribute to economic development. There is the widespread recognition that despite various initiatives to counter the trend, the global distribution of wealth is becoming ever more unequal, with the gap between rich and poor, both at the country level, and within countries, as well as between individuals, widening. Meanwhile, the various benefits that can accrue to the wielders of information power (see Srinivasa (2006) reviewed in this volume of EJISDC) contribute primarily to the OECD economies as well as a small number of developing nations. Consistent with Srinivasa's analysis, the situation is not currently getting much better for most people.

However, the current analysis was not always so pessimistic. The availability and penetration of ICTs did give rise to great hopes for improved social welfare, as well as a more equitable distribution of income and wealth. Certainly some countries have more or less successfully extricated themselves from the depths of economic deprivation, notably in South East and East Asia, as well as selected countries elsewhere such as Argentina and Brazil. But these are exceptions, surrounded by many much less successful countries that lack the resources, the knowledge, the political will (or authority) to make the difference. Are there opportunities for these countries? These then are the issues germane to this book. Readers of Lewis' book, reviewed elsewhere in this volume of EJISDC, will indeed encounter examples of developing nations that are able to offer IT Application Services on an offshoring basis. Carmel and Tjia (2005) provide similar examples.

This book offers a wealth of information to students and practitioners of the role of ICTs in the new economy and offers much food for thought.

Carmel, E. and Tjia, P. (2005) *Offshoring Information Technology: Sourcing and Outsourcing to a Global Workforce*, Cambridge University Press.